Blacks rejected

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with Kennedy, all members of the House Banking Committee, were Democrats Esteban Torres of California; Barney Frank and Richard Neal of Mascachusetts and Floyd Flake of New York, as well as Republican Thomas Ridge of Pennsylvania.

Their effort is being backed by groups such as the National Assocration for the Advancement of Colored People, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now and the National Council of La Raza.

Monday's report by regulators, ordered by Congress, was the broadest look yet at lending patterns in the nation, covering 6.4 million applications to 9,300 banks, savings institutions, credit unions and mortgage banking companies.

It also was the first time the government has specifically collected information on lending by race, ethnic group and gender.

Until adoption in 1989 of a section in the savings and loan bailout law, the government gathered data on lending only by neighborhood.

Kennedy, who sponsored the requirement leading to Monday's report, said it "portrays an America

Other lawmakers appearing where credit is a privilege of race and wealth, not a function of the ability to pay back a loan."

> Kennedy's home city of Boston had the highest rejection rate for blacks, 34.9 percent, among 19 large cities examined.

Houston had the highest rejection rate for Hispanics, 25.7 per-

The wide differences in loan rejection rates by race and ethnic group occurred despite the 14-yearold Community Reinvestment Act and the 15-year-old Home Mortgage Disclosure Act.

The reinvestment law requires banks to prove they are serving businesses and consumers in lowincome neighborhoods.

The disclosure act is designed to uncover any "redlining" refusing to lend to poor or minority areas - by financial institutions.

Federal Reserve Governor John LaWare, a former banker, cautioned reporters at a Monday news conference not to conclude from the study's figures that banks were discriminating against minorities.

The rejection rates, although correlated by income, do not take into account such other factors as applicants' credit and employment histories and current debt loads, he

Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-Texas, chairman of the House Banking Committee, called on President Bush to hold a White House meeting of community groups, civil rights organizations and local government officials to devise a strategy for dealing with the issue.

"It matters not whether the discrimination is intentional. Discrimination by ignorance is just as hurtful and just as destructive as discrimination by design," Gonzalez said in a letter to Bush.

The industry's biggest trade group said it was appointing its own task force of bankers to come up with ways to increase lending to minorities.

"We are very concerned about these statistics," said Rob Dugger, chief economist of the American Bankers Association.

Bankers blame the government and other participants in the real estate industry at least in part for the figures.

"Since 1981, government funding for low-income housing has been reduced for budgetary reasons over 75 percent. That funding cannot be replaced by the banking industry alone and it cannot be replaced without reducing credit for other purposes," Dugger said.

Little has changed

tion in a way."

But Bob Summerville, a social studies specialist in the state Department of Education, sees trouble ahead if future classrooms emphasize the experiences of one ethnic group over another.

He said that even if schools have always taught history as "white history," the wrong can't be corrected by teaching history as "black history."

"It seems to be in the name of making people proud we seem to be tearing our society apart," Summerville said. "It seems to me that we should look less at our differences and more at what holds us together if we're going to indecirinate people."

Like Norell, Summerville sug-

arsenals of strategic bombers and

the peace dividend back to life is

the President's unilateral declara-

tion of cutbacks in tactical nuclear

Cold War. The Soviets and other

countries are rushing to match our

cuts, and the cutback fever is likely

to spread to other weapons sys-

weapons systems now in an

advanced stage of development

without endangering national secu-

Another development bringing

That really writes an end to the

Experts say we can drop some

nuclear missiles.

weapons.

rity.

gested the perceived lack of black history in Alabama classrooms is likely one symptom of a more serious illness in the education system.

"The discussion over the way we organize courses and teach them isn't the question of whether we're teaching black history well but whether we're teaching history well," he said.

Autrey said she agrees that some of the failings may be on the part of the system or rooted in other factors such as student apathy. But nevertheless, she clearly remembers how her Alabama State students responded to novels and autobiographies from black authors.

"They were enraptured by those books and they got so much

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from them," she said. "It gave them a better idea of who they were, and a new motivation and incentive for what they could become as individuals and a people."

Sallie Cook, a teacher at Holt High School in Tuscaloosa, said textbooks don't contain enough black history but supplemental material or lectures often are not welcome.

"If you do teach something about one group or one minority in the classroom, then you get people saying you're teaching black history," said Cook, a former Alabama Education Association president.

Autrey agreed. "We're still fighting the battle in every way as far as black history and what it means," she said.

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Peace dividend

Continued from page A5

what weapons systems are needed ing personnel, of \$600 million. to fight in regional conflicts. With the Soviet threat gone, While the allied victory was how many do we need? I don't made possible in part through know, but surely not the 15 we expensive weapons systems, we thought were necessary to wage a found that other big ticket items weren't necessary, including vast Soviets.

> The B-2 Stealth bomber has been controversial since it first came off the drawing boards. It is designed to carry nuclear bombs to targets in the Soviet Union. But without an enemy, how can we justify a price tag of about \$865 million per plane?

Same with Star Wars - the sci-fi fantasy that's already cost \$20 billion and for which Congress is considering outlays of between \$3.5 and 4.6 billion this year.

There are other expensive weapons systems in the budget that can be slashed without compromising U.S. military security.

A study by defense experts at For example, there are 15 the Brookings Institute says that active aircraft carriers, each with a defense spending could be cut by total annual operating cost, includover a third over the next decade,

amounting to between \$316 billion and \$619 billion depending on which options are chosen for various spending decisions.

That kind of money can make global war strategy against the a real difference. It could fund all or most of the Urban League's Marshall Plan for America, which would develop our human resources and enable us to be more competitive.

And even such a reduced Pentagon budget would still leave the U.S. far and away the world's strongest military power — easily able to defend itself and its interests around the world.

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